

Case 3215

E.L. Holmberg (1917, 1918), 'Las especies argentinas de *Coelioxys*' (Insecta, Hymenoptera): proposed suppression of 139 names applied to groups of species

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is the suppression of 139 names which were published by E.L. Holmberg in 1917–1918 for divisions and subdivisions of the megachilid bee genus *Coelioxys* Latreille, 1809 (family MEGACHILIDAE). These names were devised for a key to species of *Coelioxys* which occur in Argentina; they have never been used as names for taxa nor have type species been fixed, but under Article 10.4 of the Code they are available as genus-group names and, unless they are suppressed, some would be senior synonyms of currently accepted subgenera of *Coelioxys*, and possibly senior homonyms of genus-group names in use in other taxonomic fields.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Hymenoptera; Apoidea; MEGACHILIDAE; *Coelioxys*; bees; Argentina.

1. Holmberg (1917, 1918a, 1918b) published 139 uninominal names for infra-generic groups of species of the bee genus *Coelioxys* Latreille, 1809 (family MEGACHILIDAE) which occur in Argentina. Each group was characterized in keys and in descriptive synopses.

2. Under Article 10.4 of the Code Holmberg's names for divisions and subdivisions of *Coelioxys* are available as genus-group names; even if they are regarded as names established for 'certain assemblages of taxonomic convenience known as collective groups' (Article 42.2.1) they would still be available for purposes of homonymy (Article 56.1). However, the names have never been used for taxa by subsequent authors and no type species have been designated for the groups. His names have not been cited in the *Zoological Record* or in compendia such as Neave's *Nomenclator Zoologicus*. I have previously (Michener, 2000, p. 527) noted their existence and cautioned against their use.

3. In his Introduction Holmberg (1917, pp. 544–545) discussed his classification as follows (translated from the Spanish): 'In the present state of our knowledge it would be useless to attempt to group the species of *Coelioxys* in the form of scientifically unimpeachable subgenera. Many of our species are known only by one sex; others only from extremely brief descriptions . . . I propose for our species eleven groups, artificial like all those which have been tentatively established for this interesting genus'. He expressed the hope that his provisional arrangement would assist understanding of the species, but this has not proved to be the case (see para. 6 below).

4. Holmberg divided each of his major sections of Argentinian *Coelioxys* in a very complicated and hierarchical way, each level being further subdivided. For example, a section called *Erythrobasis* was described and divided into two major subsections which were described and named as *Haematonotos* and *Melanonotos*. *Haematonotos* (containing 10 species) comprised Cohort 1 while *Melanonotos* (61 species) comprised Cohorts 2–9. The cohorts themselves were neither named nor described, but they were further divided into groups which were and species were assigned to the subsidiary groups. As an example, Cohort 3 included 16 named groups at various levels.

5. Holmberg reported 82 Argentinian species of *Coelioxys*, some of them new, and in classifying their characters introduced 136 names for divisions of the genus; the genus-group names outnumbered the species because of the hierarchical tiers of his classification system. The new species are adequately described and some of his specific names are in use, so his works (as distinct from the genus-group names) should not be suppressed for nomenclatural purposes.

6. Schrottky (1920) did not accept Holmberg's treatment of *Coelioxys* and remarked (p. 191, in translation) 'without wishing to deny in any way the quality of Dr Holmberg's work, I must admit that his classification confuses me in several respects', and he did not adopt any of Holmberg's names for supraspecific taxa.

7. Of 15 subgeneric names currently used in the genus *Coelioxys* (see Michener, 2000) all but two were published after Holmberg's works and would probably fall as junior synonyms, with resultant instability, if Holmberg's names were recognized. For example, *Coelioxys vidua* Smith, 1854, the type species of *Glyptocoelioxys* Mitchell, 1973, was included by Holmberg (1917, p. 559) in the section of *Coelioxys* named *Erythrobasis*, its subsection *Melanonotos* and successively less inclusive named components of the latter.

8. As mentioned in para. 2 above none of Holmberg's supraspecific names have been used. In order to conserve both the currently accepted subgeneric names in *Coelioxys* and genus-group names in other taxonomic fields which might otherwise be junior homonyms, I urge the Commission to suppress all the genus-group names established by Holmberg (1917, 1918a,b) for his tentative classification of *Coelioxys*.

9. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:
- (1) to use its plenary power to suppress for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy the genus-group names published by Holmberg (1917, 1918a, 1918b) which are listed in the Appendix below;
 - (2) to place the names suppressed in (1) above on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.

References

- Holmberg, E.L. 1917. Las especies argentinas de *Coelioxys*. *Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires*, 28: 541–591.
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- Holmberg, E.L. 1918b. Suplemento 1 a las especies argentinas de *Coelioxys*, num. 2. *Physis* (Buenos Aires), 4: 145–166.
- Michener, C.D. 2000. *The bees of the world*. xiv, 913 pp. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
- Schrottky, C. 1920. Himenópteros nuevos o poco conocidos sudamericanos. *Revista do Museu Paulista*, 12(2): 177–227.

Appendix

The page number for each name refers to its publication in Holmberg (1917) except where (1918a) or (1918b) is indicated.

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).